

19 Feb 70

26

Czech Aide Defects in New York

**Called on Carpet,
No. 3 Man at U.N.
Seeks Asylum in U.S.**

Washington Post Foreign Service

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 18
—Czechoslovakia's No. 3 diplomat at the United Nations has defected to the United States with his family, American sources confirmed today.

He is Jiri Mladek, who has sought asylum and protection from the Immigration and Naturalization Service for himself, his wife, and his 20-year-old son, who has been a student at Hunter College in Manhattan.

A lawyer rather than a career diplomat, Mladek had been scheduled to return to Prague Feb. 15, after four years here.

He was said to have kept his intentions secret from the Czechoslovak Mission by pretending to go on vacation Feb. 1. He notified the mission of his changed status last Friday, following assurance that he and his family would be welcome in the United States.

What appears to have triggered his decision to defect was that he recently was called on the carpet of the Czechoslovak Mission because he did not conform to the new political spirit of self-criticism.

Mladek is the first Czechoslovak diplomat to defect here. Informed sources said only two other diplomats are known to have defected following the invasion and the crackdown on the liberals who had emerged during the heyday of the deposed Czechoslovak leader, Alexander Dubcek.

These were the charge d'affaires in Switzerland and the consul general in Sydney, Australia. Approximately 40 Czechoslovak ambassadors have been reassigned since August, 1968, seemingly as a political precaution.

A possible reason for the small number of diplomats to sever ties with Prague, the sources said, is that the Czechoslovak foreign service is heavy with security men. But even some of these have appeared to be reluctant to go home following the Soviet invasion.

Apart from diplomats, a correspondent of the Czechoslovak news agency here who had been summoned home to answer criticisms on the eve of the invasion remained in the United States.